

## **GLBT Commission Minutes    November 20, 2014**

Aren Stone recorded these minutes.

### **THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY DECEMBER 11, 2014**

**Commissioners Present:** Anna Weick, Aren Stone, Bob Parlin, John Gintell, Lesley Phillips, Mal Malme, Mike McKenna, Neil MacInnes-Barker, Rachel Oppenheimer, Steven Lee

**Commissioners Absent:** Bill Barnert, Caitlin Drechsler, Gregory Grays-Thomas, Kara Smith, Kevin Shpritzer, Kristina Mastropasqua, Maggie Giles, Paul Miller, Neil Scannell

**Guests:** Superintendant Chris Burke, Cambridge Police Department  
Elysia Chandler, GLBT Commission Intern  
Ed Byrne, Mayor's Liaison to the Commission and Student Diversity Programs  
Coordinator, Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School

Call to Order.

Approved October meeting minutes.

Added to and accepted November meeting agenda.

### **Report from Ed Byrne**

LGBTQ Teachers and Allies Networking and Social Event: John and Ed met recently to talk about upcoming events, including this one. Ed will work with the Commission on this. It can be a combined event for teachers, school staff, and GSA advisors. Perhaps after school at about 4:00, in a place with a cash bar where we (Mayor's Office and Commission) provide snack food. We would like to include all public, charter, and private schools in Cambridge. **Planning**

**Volunteers: John Bob, Kara**

Project 10 East (CRLS's GSA): The students are working on developing training for teachers in the Upper Schools (Cambridge's Middle Schools). Putnam Ave. Upper School asked Ed for help with this and he handed it to Project 10 East as a project. They plan on talking with teachers about their experiences of being queer in school. They are also planning on working with Vassal Lane Upper School, with a focus more on bullying and harassment. The CRLS students will also be meeting with the Upper School GSAs.

National Coming Out Day Assembly: For the first time the students had 2 assemblies and both were full. They did some presentations about gender identity and expression and transgender issues.

Requests from CRLS students about student records: Transgender students have been requesting gender marker and/or name changes on student records and the school is working on how to handle this. There may be an issue for students, or former students, who haven't gone through a legal name or gender marker change. Some suggestions from Commissioners included: Have a section in the records for preferred name and gender so that yearbooks and other documents that don't need to conform to someone's legal name can use preferred name and gender. Let students know that help is available about how to change legal name and gender. Have more choices for

gender than “male” or “female”. For the yearbook: “Please write your name as you want it to appear in the yearbook.” There were questions about how these decisions get made and who makes them and what gender boxes are on student and parent forms currently. Ed wasn’t sure but noted that the Teen Health Survey that is administered to the students by the Cambridge Health Alliance have boxes for male, female, transgender and questioning.

### **Liaisons to Other City Departments**

This is another topic that John and Ed talked about at their meeting. We would like to have liaisons from other city departments to our Commission. Currently we have liaisons from the Police Department and the Mayor’s Office. We would like to have stronger connections with the Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP) and other departments and having a designated liaison is an effective way to do this. Chris Burke noted that there is a huge benefit to liaisons attending monthly meetings, rather than simply being a point person. **John and Aren have a meeting scheduled** with the City Manager and Deputy City Manager and this will be on the agenda.

### **Other Commissions**

Similarly, we’d like to have more connections with the other Commissions, especially the Peace, Disability, Human Rights, and Women’s Commissions. It was noted that a Human Rights Commissioner attended one of our meetings and Neil MacInnes-Barker attended one of their meetings and several Commissioners have talked with members of other Commissions at events. **Ed will talk with Mayor Maher about hosting** a round table discussion of the Commissions. He asked the question: “What can we do together that we can’t do alone?”

### **Police Department Report from Chris Burke**

LGBTQ Cultural Competency Training: Chris attended the recent GOAL New England (Gay Officers Action League) training at the Lowell Police Academy, where over 1000 public safety personnel were trained. This is a direct result of the trainings that GOAL has done in Cambridge. The training was run by officers who have been in their departments for 30 years, 25 years, and 5 years. Chris was looking at this training as a possible one to use for the cultural competency training that the Commission has requested for all city employees (3000 people) but the focus is too narrowly on public safety to be appropriate. The next step is to look at professional trainers. Chris has contacts at MTPC (Mass. Transgender Political Coalition), GOAL NE, and MassEquality who, along with the Commission, can vet the trainers.

### **Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR)**

It was noted that today (Nov. 20) is the official TDOR. The event will be held on Sunday, Nov. 23 at 4:00 at University Lutheran Church in Harvard Square. Chris Burke helped to get the permit for the outside gathering in Winthrop Park. Mal will represent the Commission during the Speak Out portion of the program.

### **Intern Elysia Chandler**

Elysia reported on her work so far. She is creating and administering a survey of health care facilities in Cambridge to assess policies and practices in regards to LGBTQ seniors. Elysia has been working on her own as well as meeting with Aren, John, Nancy Schlacter from the Human Rights Commission (where Elysia’s office is) and Taha Jennings, aide to the City Manager. The

first phase of the survey will focus on health care, including hospitals, health care practices, and assisted living and nursing home facilities that include health care for their residents. The next phase will include patient feedback. Hopefully there will be the chance to move to part two--a survey focusing on senior housing facilities, including Cambridge Housing Authority. One purpose of both aspects of the project is to assess how the Commission might be helpful to organizations that serve LGBTQ seniors.

Elysia shared a survey draft for feedback. Suggestions and comments included: The direct care staff might have different responses than the administrative staff. It's important that doctors, nurses, and other staff have the chance to fill out the survey. An email blast to all staff in each organization might be helpful. Some might fill out surveys on line and then Elysia could choose some to interview in person. There were some helpful suggestions about formatting the survey to make it more user-friendly. Hospitals have PFACs—Patient Family Advisory Councils—that may be helpful when talking with patients directly. Steven emailed the survey to all Commissioners to get feedback to Elysia by Thanksgiving. The question was asked—How old is “senior”? We decided that 60 and older would be our working definition.

Aren and John will continue meeting to support Elysia. Any Commissioners are welcome to join us, usually on Monday mornings at 10:30 in the Human Rights Commission office. Let Aren or John know so they can confirm the time and place.

### **True Colors/Theater Offensive Event Opportunity**

Bob has been talking with Ellen Brodsky about a film she has made about True Colors, the Theater Offensive's youth troupe. The film is called “The Year We Thought About Love” and will be screened next year. We have been asked to host a screening in October 2015, which would include publicity, food, and event management, much as we did for our past film screenings/discussions. We voted to host this event. Bob will be the liaison to the film maker.

### **Other Events**

Elders of Color Flashback Sunday presents Health Aging Series for LGBT Older Adults at the Citywide Senior Center (Central Square). There will be speakers, including Rev. Irene Monroe, and food. It is cosponsored by the Cambridge Council on Aging, Central Boston Elder Services, Fenway Institute, and the LGBT Aging Project. Sunday December 7, 2-4 pm. It is free but needs an RSVP by phone 617-396-4926.

Several Commissioners attended the Flavors of Fall Youth on Fire Benefit on November 17. They raised almost \$30,000 for Youth on Fire.

### **Commission Openings**

We have 3 openings. Caitlin and Gregory will not be continuing.. The deadline has been extended to December 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Youth on Fire**

Neil MacInnes-Barker and members of YOF continue to show “No Place Like Home”. Neil is donating a percentage of proceeds to the Youth Housing Initiative, which is building the

Cambridge Youth Shelter. Neil is doing a music video of the film's song, "Invisible Butterfly" with a singer and YOF members. He hopes to have this on You Tube and iTunes.

### **Veterans**

Neil marched with an LGBT veteran group, Outvets, in the Boston Veterans Day parade. They received a hugely positive response from the crowd. It was especially moving for older vets.

Carl Sciortino, Executive Director of AIDS Action Committee, is working with the VA healthcare system to provide LGBTQ cultural competency training for their healthcare providers. He is looking to get support from Secretary of Veteran's Affairs Coleman Nee.